

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
PACIFIC BASIN AREA
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

CONTOUR ORCHARD AND OTHER FRUIT AREA

(Hectare, Acre)
CODE 331

DEFINITION

Planting orchards, vineyards, or small fruits so that all cultural operations are done on the contour.

PURPOSE

- To reduce erosion and control water.
- Improve water infiltration and soil water.

CONDITION WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On sloping orchards, vineyards and small fruit plantings where other cultural and management practices do not control soil and water loss, or permanent cover is not established.

CRITERIA

Trees, shrubs or vine rows will be established on the contour. Alignment is required with terraces, diversions, or contour strips

Effective erosion control credit will be that derived from approved Pacific Basin Area erosion prediction tools (Section I, FOTG).

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Where contouring is used without ground cover or other support practices, the allowable deviation from the contour should not exceed one half of the up and down hill slope length used for erosion prediction or 2 percent, whichever is less. Up to 3 percent row grade may be permitted for short distances (150 ft, 50 meters) if the row outlets are grassed or grass is maintained between tree, shrub, or vine rows.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Effects on the water budget, especially on volume and rates of runoff and infiltration.

Potential for a change in plant growth and transpiration because of changes in the volume of soil water.

Potential for development of hillside seeps down slope resulting from increased infiltration in the presence of restrictive layers

Effects on erosion and the movement of sediment, pathogens, and soluble and sediment-attached substances carried by runoff.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Perform all tillage, tractor and herbicide operations along the established row grade. Promptly repair any damage to established ground cover, mow ground cover periodically and control noxious weeds.